(b) if so, the details of the steps being taken by Government to stop the cutting of trees to control the pollution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Trees absorb/trap pollutants (particulates and gases) to a large extent. As such cutting of trees may increase pollution load in the area and may pose health risk. However, there is no conclusive data available to establish a relationship between cutting of trees, pollution and spread of diseases.

(b) Steps being taken by the Government to stop cutting of trees are:

(i) Legal measures like Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and rules, guidelines thereof;

(ii) Management measures like working of forests according to approved Working Plans, Forest Development Agencies and Joint Forest Management.

(iii) Financial measures like providing assistance to the State/Union Territories under Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Externally Aided Projects.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme called "Integrated Forest Protection Scheme" in operation since 2002-03, funds are provided to States and Union Territories primarily for strengthening of infrastructure for protection of forests from illicit felling, fires, encroachments etc.

(iv) A network of protected areas (National parks, Sanctuaries etc.) has been established.

Cruelty towards animals

1914. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases registered for cruelty towards animals during last one year; and

(b) the action taken against the guilty individuals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) During 2003-04 a total number of 24, 242 cases pertaining to cruelty towards animals have been registered under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960;

(b) 312 persons have been prosecuted during 2003-04.

Growth of food processing Industries

1915. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of growth of food processing industries during the last two years of the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) the percentage of growth estimated during the Tenth Five Year Plan; and

(c) the steps taken to realize the estimated growth?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI SUBODH KANT SAHAY): (a) to (c) According to an estimate, growth fo Food Processing Industries was 7.1% in the last few years of 9th Plan. Growth rate during the 10th Plan in estimated to be 7.3% for a GDP growth of 6%. In order to promote Food Processing Industries, plan schemes have already been implemented to provide financial assistance for establishement and modernization of food processing units, creation of infrastructure, support for R&D, Human Resource Development besides other promotional measures to encourage Development of Food Processing Industries. For giving boost to growth of Food Processing Industries, the Government has allowed under Income Tax Act, a deduction of 100% of profit for five years and 25% of profits for the next five years in case of new agro processing industries set up to process, preserve and package fruits and vegetables. Recently, on 28th February, 2005, in Parliament, Government has announced launching of a National Horticulture Mission with an objective to ensure an end-to-end approach for the horticulture sector.